



Newsfront

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NEWSFRONT

UNIVERSITY ORDINANCE

The infamous University Ordinance of Ayub era, which became a rallying point in the academic community's opposition to Ayub Khan, lives even two years after the dictator's fall. The High Court Bar Association recently demanded repeal of this black law and urged the Government to restore the autonomy of the universities. On November 16, the Karachi University Teachers Society observed an "Autonomy and Democracy for University Day" and strongly condemned this impingement on academic freedom and demanded an immediate restoration of democratic institutions in the university. The teachers deplored the reign of terror let loose in Pakistani universities and the excessive powers wielded by the vice-chancellor. It may be recalled that a Jamaat-e-Islami fanatic Ishtiaq Hussain Qureshi, in his decade of destruction, systematically smashed all the democratic and decent practices in the University of Karachi and created a coterie of stooges. In an earlier statement, Dr. Afzal Hussain Qadri, Dean of the Faculty of Science at Karachi University and a noted entomologist, warned that failure to grant complete autonomy to the universities will deter the development and growth of the universities in Pakistan. Representatives of 3000 university professors throughout Pakistan assembled in Karachi and expressed similar views on the subject.

Sixty four prominent citizens of Karachi, in a recent joint statement, also demanded the repeal of the University Ordinance. The signatories included writers Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Syed Sibte Hassan, Hajra Masroor, Ibrahim Jalees, and Pir Husamuddin Rashdi, and politicians Ehtishamul Huq Thanwi and Mahmood-ul-Haq Usmani.

The Martial Law Government of Gen. Yahya Khan, which claims to be neutral, has not only failed to remove the Ayubian sword hanging over the head of the academic community, but has strengthened the hands of the fascists like I.H. Qureshi and jailed hundreds of students.

MURDER COVERUP

The van driver who killed the visiting Polish Deputy Foreign Minister and three Pakistani nationals at Karachi airport admitted that it was a premeditated murder and that he belonged to Jamaat-e-Islami. These facts were broadcast on BBC, Radio Japan, U.S. radio networks and elsewhere and the world press covered the event. Yet, the Government of Pakistan and the controlled press in Pakistan is still trying to hide the facts and portray the murder as an accident. *Pakistan Affairs*, published by the Pakistan Embassy in Washington, in its issue of November 2 described the event as an "accident" and continued the story on the last page under the same heading.

COLLEGES CLOSED

Private colleges in Karachi have decided to close down from January 1 rather than accept the demands of the striking teachers. The teachers have been demanding higher wages and better working conditions and have been asking the Government to implement its new educational policy. The West Pakistan College Teachers Association observed a protest week in which it tried to submit a petition to the Governor of Sind, but the teachers were beaten and abused. The Governor, instead of apologizing for the police indecency, blamed the teachers for 'disturbing' him when he was entertaining his guests. In spite of the paper laws, private colleges continue to operate on a jungle law and deprive the teachers of their legitimate rights. On November 18, the Sind government introduced an ordinance, allegedly safeguarding teachers' rights but actually legalizing the dictatorial power of the governing bodies of the colleges. The ordinance fixed the minimum monthly salary for the professors at Rs. 350.

Miss Anita Ghulam Ali, President of WPCTA, denounced the new ordinance and rejected the terms of service favorable to the management. The college management retaliated by laying off all the teachers from their jobs and closing down the schools. Long live private enterprise, down with education.

MILITARY DRAFT

An ordinance issued by the Government of Pakistan on November 7 makes one year military service compulsory for all male

Pakistanis between the ages 18 and 20 who have completed high school. Any action under this law will be immune from being challenged in any court of Pakistan.

ILLFED BABIES

A study conducted by Dr. Fehmida Jalil of Mayo Hospital, Lahore in the low income areas of the city revealed that by their first birthday 87% of the infants remain underfed. Undernourishment increases progressively with the increased food needs of the child, in their first month 50% are underfed but the figure rises to 77% by the time they are six months old and to 87% by their first birthday. Infant mortality rate was found to be approximately 200 per thousand live births—a figure much larger than the national average of 150 estimated by American sponsored Population Growth Estimate experiment.

MORE LANDLESS

The capitalist panacea for Pakistan's agricultural problems is hitting the very elements of the society who are most depressed by the system. With the arrival of "Green Revolution" in the country, i.e. tractors, tubewells, new seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, etc., thousands of tenants have been evicted from the land. The productivity of the land has increased and it needs less labor. But the land relations have not changed. The new Kulak class is hurting the small peasant-owner by causing a drop in food prices and the tenant farmer or share-cropper by laying him off. Some tenants try to challenge the eviction in the courts of law but most set out in search of other jobs and usually end up with swelling the army of the unemployed in towns and cities. In 1960 there were only 3000 tractors in Pakistan, but by 1969 their number had risen to 20,000 and is steadily increasing. According to some studies of the Planning Commission, mechanization of farms reduces the need for labor by 50%. Planning Commission's conservative estimate shows that by 1985 four million people in West Pakistan will be affected by land eviction. The Government itself is pushing the tillers off the state owned lands.

TV PROGRAMS

Special programs scheduled for the Ramadan and the election season led to a curtailment of American crime dramas and cheap comedies shown regularly on Pakistani television. Nonetheless, the following imported programs continued to be on the air: *Lucy Show*, *Ironsides*, *Linus the lion-hearted*, *Bewitched*, *Sherlock Homes*, *Disneyland*, *Magic Roundabout* and several feature films. Pakistani viewers pay an annual fee of Rs. 50 for watching these programs, commercials, and some rare local productions twenty five hours a week. There was a protest demonstration in Karachi recently against the exorbitant TV fee and a new TV set was put to flame.

CONSUMER CULTURE

The emergence of new bourgeois and petty bourgeois classes in Pakistan has inevitably led to an increased demand for the consumer goods and modern "amenities of life." Despite the aggravating foreign exchange problem in the country, foreign goods, considered as status symbols, are being imported in large quantities. Pakistani newspapers these days are advertising, among other things, the following goodies: automatic transmission cars, fancy sound on sound stereo tape recorders, tape cassettes, auto record players and tape recorders, and mini gramophones. To facilitate the shoppers, the United and Habib Banks have come out with credit cards—a sad blow to the purse snatchers.



The Establishment Press Had Predicted Debacle of AL & PPP